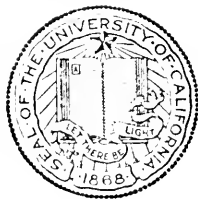


PT
2386
M6E5
1798

Kotzebue

The Shouge

A
A
0
0
0
0
0
7
9
9
5
6
9
0



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

FREDERIC THOMAS BLANCHARD
ENDOWMENT FUND

THE
STRANGER:

A
COMEDY.

FREELY TRANSLATED FROM

KOTZEBU'S

GERMAN COMEDY

OF

MISANTHROPY AND REPENTANCE.

THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR C. DILLY IN THE POULTRY :

SOLD ALSO BY T. LEWIS, RUSSEL-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN, AND
J. WRIGHT, PICCADILLY.

1798.

(Price One Shilling and Sixpence.)

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLICK.

THE following Free Translation of KOTZEBUE'S much-admired Comedy of MISANTHROPY AND REPENTANCE, is the fruit of the leisure hours of one, whose pursuits are altogether distinct from the Stage. It was not undertaken with the hope of fame or emolument; but in consequence of the pleasure experienced by having seen it performed in its Native Language. When finished, it was offered, about a year and a half since, to the Managers of DRURY-LANE THEATRE; who, after having had it in their possession eight or ten days, returned it; with an answer, politely signifying "That they did not think it would succeed in representation."

With this answer the Translator rested fully satisfied; the more so, as he thought it not impossible that Mr. Cumberland's very excellent, and deservedly applauded Play, THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE, might be supposed, in some measure, to have adapted one of the principal Characters to the English Stage, in a
6 *manner*

manner far more interesting than any Translation could hope to do.—His surprise, therefore, was not small when *THE STRANGER* was announced for representation and when he saw it acted, with scarcely any alteration from his own Manuscript, except in the names of the Characters, and with the addition of a Song and some Dancing, entirely unconnected with the subject, he could not help feeling that he had been ungenerously treated.

Under these Circumstances, he considered it as a point of justice due to himself, to submit his Play to the candid judgment of the Publick, as early as possible; and to endeavour to secure, at least some part of the Credit, to which he was vain enough to think himself entitled. It is here printed from the Copy which was sent to the Managers; and on its merit the impartial Reader is left to decide. His indulgence is requested for such slight inaccuracies as it is presumed, might have been easily remedied, but there are no capital faults to cut with that candour and leniency, which ought to characterize the conduct of the Reader, who peruse the amusements of the Theatre.

That the Managers should have rejected his piece is not to be wondered at, as it was not a play of regular

to the Translator.—Had another and more perfect translation of KOTZEBUE's play been previously put into their hands, and had they signified their intention of bringing that forward, the writer of this Address would have withdrawn his claim in silence: well aware that the present Translation did, in fact, require that rectification, which appears to form almost the only, and that a very slight, difference between the play represented, and that here printed.—But on comparing all circumstances, he may perhaps stand excused for supposing that a Manager “who writes himself,” may sometimes (as SIR PRETUL PLAGIARY says) “serve the thoughts of others as gypsies do stolen children: disfigure them to make them pass for his own.”—And, though the Writer might have been well content, had “the best thoughts in his Tragedy, been put into the Manager's own Comedy;” he cannot rest altogether quiet on the undisguised appropriation of the whole of his play.

In this Translation, most of the nonsense, which was hissed on the stage, is omitted.—The last scene, now so admirably performed by MR. KEMBLE and MRS. SIDDONS, is considerably shortened from the German; in which it appears even tediously long.—The Translator has also ventured to deviate from the
original

original plot in one delicate particular.—He has not made the wife actually commit that crime which is a stain to the female character, tho' she was on the brink of ruin, by eloping from her husband.—This last liberty he trusts will be excused; partly because he feels that, according to the dictates of nature, reconciliation would in such circumstances be more easily obtained: but chiefly, because he considered it as more consistent with the moral sentiment, and more congenial to the heart of an English audience, than the forgiveness of a wife who had been actually guilty.

26th March, 1798.

A. S*****K.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

<i>The</i> STRANGER	MR. KIMBLE.
LORD SANTON, (<i>performed under the name of Count Winterien</i>)	MR. BARRYMORE.
Major BRANLEY, (<i>performed under the name of Baron Steinfort</i>)	MR. PALMER.
BITTERMAN, Lord Santon's Steward, (<i>performed under the name of Solomon</i>)	MR. WENZLER.
PETER, his Son, (<i>under the same name</i>)	MR. SULL.
FRANCIS, servant to the Stranger,	MR. R. PALMER.
TOM, an old Man	MR. ADEIN.

WOMEN.

Mrs. SWITH, (<i>performed under the name of Mrs. Haller</i>)	MRS. STODDONS.
Lady SANTON, (<i>performed under the name of Countess Win- terien</i>)	Mrs. GOODALE.
Mrs. Chamberlain to Lady Santon,	Mrs. STEWARD.

THE
STRANGER:

A
COMEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE—*A Cottage. On one side a poor hut among trees.*

PETER *discovered chasing a butterfly, which at last he catches.*

II HAVE it.—Lord! how beautiful! Red, blue, yellow—(*he places it on his hat.*) Upon my soul I am a clever fellow, whatever my father may say against it. But hold! I almost forgot the errand for which I came here.—Mrs. Smith sent me, and for her I'd go through fire and water.—What a lovely face she has! I must say I am in love with her, and I am sure, from what I see, that she has as great a liking for me.—(*He takes a purse from his pocket.*)—The contents of this purse I am to give to old Tom, who, poor fellow! is dangerously ill. Mrs. Smith charged me, not to tell it any body.—The sweet creature may depend upon it, for I an't a babbler. But I must say, Mrs. Smith does very wrong, to give all her pin-money to the poor.—But I shall soon put a stop to it, when I am married to her.

B

Enter

THE STRANGER.

Enter STRANGER *and* FRANCIS.

The Stranger melancholy—looking rather wild upon Peter, who gazes, bowing, and Exit.

Stran. Do you know that fellow ?

Fran. He is the son of Lord Santon's steward.

Stran. You were telling me yesterday about—

Fran. About the poor peasant, Sir.

Stran. Well ?

Fran. You did not answer me.—You appeared full of thought.

Stran. If it is in time to-day—relate it—

Fran. I have not the power of doing good. All my abilities only extended to commiserate, and to tell you, that this poor man is without assistance.

Stran. How do you know that ?

Fran. He told me so.

Stran. Ah ! Men will always complain and talk when in want ; but how haughty, proud, and self-sufficient are they when in affluence !

Fran. But that is not the case with this poor man.

Stran. Why not ?

Fran. My heart feels the answer it could make, but my tongue cannot speak its feelings.

Stran. Fool !

Fran. A feeling fool is better than a cold wise man.

Stran. Deprive man of feeling, and he will still be the same.

Fran. A maxim you do not act up to.—You are a generous benefactor. You indeed feel for others.—A thousand times have I been a witness of your sympathy ;

sympathy for the miseries of your fellow-creatures.

Stran. How this man plagues me! Flattery, flattery, how often dost thou assail our ears! Man does but deceive: he weeps before our faces, and laughs when he is behind us.

Fran. There are exceptions.—This peasant—

Stran. Has he related to you his misfortune?

Fran. He has.

Stran. A man really unhappy seldom complains.

Fran. Oh, Sir! what comfort does the mind feel, when oppressed with grief, if it can but unburthen itself in the bosom of a friend.

Stran. Wretched maxim! Is it not enough then, that *he* is unhappy, but he must endeavour to render others the same by complaint?—Have you seen him often?

Fran. But once.

Stran. (*With an ironical smile.*) And you have already gained his confidence—ha! ha!

Fran. They have taken his only son from him.

Stran. I am sorry for it.

Fran. The poor man is sick and forsaken by all.

Stran. I can't help it.

Fran. Well; I'll say no more.

[*Exit. STRANGER into the but.*]

Fran. Ah! there he goes, and tho' he peevishly said—"I can't help it;" I'll lay my life, that he will give him abundantly. But, it is his whim. His humanity and goodness are unbounded, and the secrecy with which he performs his benevolent actions doubly enhances the value of them. He is an excellent master, but his language is uncouth.

Short questions—replies as short, and difficult to understand. He insults every body—his looks appear inexorable to the poor, while his hands deal largely to them. If misanthropy has got hold of him, the influence has hitherto only affected the head—the heart is still untouched.

Enter PETER following the STRANGER.

Peter. (*With many boxes.*) Walk in, Sir; walk in.

Stran. (*Angry.*) Fool!

Fran. What returned so quick?

Stran. What should I do there?

Fran. Did you not find every thing as I mentioned?

Stran. I found this stupid fellow—

Fran. What did he there?

Stran. The old man and he connive together. How would they have laughed in their sleeve, had I been the dupe of their intrigues, and the dictates of my heart.

Fran. How! is it possible? What could this chap have to do with the old man. (*Aside.*) I'll find out the whole. Pray, Sir, What was your business in that hut?

Peter. What have I been doing there? Why—nothing at all.

Fran. Nothing at all? ha! I may venture to say, you have not been there for nothing.

Peter. For nothing? Why it is true indeed, that I have been there for nothing. He is a wretch who takes money for every thing.—Indeed I wou'd go thro' fire and water for one single smile of Mrs. Smith—that I wou'd!

Fran.

Fran. The fact then is—you were a messenger from Mrs. Smith.

Peter. That's it ; but you know, one does not like to speak of it. Besides Mrs. Smith said, " Be so kind, says she, as to step to old Tom, but you must keep it a secret." This confidence of her's pleased me mightily, for above all I am over head and ears in love with her. However, she don't know it, and I don't mean to let any body into the secret.

Fran. That's the thing—therefore you must be silent.

Peter. To be sure—that I will. I told poor Tom, he must not think at all, that the money which I brought him came from Mrs. Smith—Not at all, says I, I won't have any thing to do with babbling.

Fran. Excellent—ha ! ha ! indeed, well said. Did you bring him much money ?

Peter. I did not count it. It was in a green purse. I think it may have been a fortnight's pin-money.

Fran. Why just a fortnight's ?

Peter. Why—because a fortnight ago I carried some to him also. I think it was on a Sunday—I took notice, Mrs. Smith seemed to be very partial to my dress.

Fran. And did all that money come from Mrs. Smith ?

Peter. To be sure—from whom else should it come ? My father is not such a fool—he tells me every day " Charity (says he) begins at home : " and more particularly in summer charity is of no use

use, "because heaven (says he) furnishes such an abundance of roots and herbs, with which poor people easily may be satisfied."

Fran. Upon my soul! an excellent father.

Peter. But Mrs. Smith laughs in his face, and tells him he is in the wrong. Last Christmas the children of the village had the small-pox—Mrs. Smith received from town a basket of physic, and desired me to go down in the village and give it them. But I refused it without hesitation, because it rained so hard.

Fran. Well, and what did she?

Peter. As true as I am here, she took the basket and went herself in the most shocking weather.

Fran. A wonderful woman!

Peter. Most truly so, and indeed sometimes beyond wonderful. She often weeps the whole day—no one knows the reason. I am apt to think she does not know it herself; and when she cries, I sit down in the kitchen and cry myself too, without knowing why.

Fran. (*Aside to the Stranger;*) Are you satisfied, Sir?

Stran. Send him away.

Fran. Good bye, master Peter.

Peter. (*Not understanding the hint;*) Sir, you are very polite.

Fran. I dare say Mrs. Smith will be anxious to hear of old Tom.

Peter. Bless my soul and body! you are very right: I should have forgot. (*To the Stranger;*) Goodbye, Sir, (*Aside to Francis;*) This Gentleman,

I dare say, is very angry, because I did not tell him any thing.

Fran. Very likely !

Peter. He shan't hear any thing. I hate chattering you know ! [Exit.

Fran. (*After a pause.*) Well, Sir : did you not mistake ?

Stran. I will not hear any thing more of it. Mrs. Smith ? Who is this Mrs. Smith ? Why is she always to be heard of wherever I go ?

Fran. Does it not afford you pleasure ?

Stran. Why so ?

Fran. Because you see, there is another benevolent soul in the world besides your own.

Stran. Poh !

Fran. You shou'd endeavour to get acquainted with her.

Stran. (*Ironically ;*) To be sure ; ay, and marry her.

Fran. I wish it were so. I have seen her several times in the garden, she is a very likely woman.

Stran. So much the worse. Beauty is like the rose, interspersed with thorns.

Fran. Not always so. Mrs. Smith has an excellent heart : there are ocular demonstrations of it.

Stran. Not a word of her charity. A woman shines in town by beauty and wit, and in the country by benevolence. Affectation ! a mere mass of deception !

Fran. I'll defend Mrs. Smith, for I am certain that she is an exception : she has done a great deal for that old man ; she can't do more, because her means

means are not adequate to the kind intentions of her heart.

Stran. (Angry.) Silence! Be gone! I'll give him nothing: the interest you take in this old man's case would fain make me believe, that you were to share together the money I give him.

Fran. (Much agitated.) Oh Sir! This sarcasm did not spring from your heart.—I—I—

Stran. (Touched—after a pause takes his hand.) Francis—forgive me!

Fran. (Pressing his hand.) Good Sir! Fate must have handled you roughly indeed, before it could establish such misanthropy in a soul possessed of every nobler virtue.

Stran. (Aside.) Ah! *(Takes a book out of his pocket, sits down, reads.)*

Fran. (Aside.) There! he is reading; and thus it is every day. For him nature is divested of every beauty—life has no charms. He never laughs; and if he speaks, some suspicion hangs on his lips, instead of blessings on his fellow-creatures.

Enter, out of the hut, Tom, a very old man.

Tom. (Not observing any body.) How sweet does the air seem after a sickness of seven weeks—After suffering want and pain, how charming once more to view the goodly prospect of the expanded sky;—with returning health all my sorrows are hushed to quiet. Oh, merciful Father! 'would all the creatures of thy creation were as happy as I am now.

Fran.

Fran. (*To the Stranger, who is attentive to the old man.*) But little comfort seems destined for this old man; yet he is thankful for that little.

Stran. Because deceitful hope lulls him even in his second childhood.

Fran. Hope is the balsam of life.

Stran. The greatest impostor on earth.

(*The old man approaches FRANCIS.*)

Fran. Well, old father! you have escaped the jaws of death.

Tom. Yes, for a little time, heaven and the dear, good Mrs. Smith, have saved me. But it cannot last long.—Oh, cou'd I but find words to express my feelings.

Fran. You should quarrel with Fate, old man, for having recalled you again to life. What can a poor old man feel of pleasure?—To the unfortunate, Death is a friendly visitor.

Tom. Am I unhappy?—Does not the beautiful morning which smiles on you, do the same on me? Is not health returned to my wither'd limbs? Believe me, Sir, a man recovered from sickness is the happiest on earth; and, besides, while I have a valuable treasure in this world I must be happy. Only one sorrow I have. My poor son, a seaman in one of our coasting traders; he always came home every four weeks;—he brought me support and joy. But alas! it is now a year ago since the cruel press-gang carried him away.—May gracious heaven protect him!—Oh, how I miss his assistance!

Stran. (*Rises much moved, gives FRANCIS the book.*) Francis, carry that to my room.

[*Exit FRANCIS.*

Stran. Fate has robb'd you of all your comforts; here, good man, here is money—buy the discharge of your son. [*Exit hastily.*

Tom. (*Following him surprised.*) Oh, oh, good heavens! So much at once! Thousand thanks! Oh, Sir, Sir, let me thank— [*Exit.*

SCENE—A Room.

Enter Mrs. SMITH, with a letter in her hand.

How is my heart grieved! Solitude had charms innumerable for me, it poured balm on my afflicted mind. Some balm, because tho' Conscience! Conscience! thou assailest us in the gay circle of the ball-room, as well as in the dreary waste; yet, in retirement, when thy reproofs attack us, tears, friendly tears, soften the distress we feel; and no one is present to say—why dost thou weep? I may rove thro' gardens, hills, and vallies, and none can see that conscience disturbs me! Indeed! I am sorry beyond expression that they are coming. They will drag me into company. I must there laugh, and accommodate myself to their fancy. Balls and assemblies will croud upon us; card-parties and routs will turn order into confusion. Hitherto my slumbers have been disturbed only by the remorse of conscience; now, when grief shall have forced my wearied eyes to sleep,

sleep, huntsmen and dogs will serenade me in the morning. And if, when company comes to the castle, there should by chance one come who knows me—Ah! how wretched is that being who is forced to avoid the meeting of friends, on whom, but for one thing, her heart would fondly feast.

Enter PETER.

Peter. Well, here I am returned.

Mrs. Smith. I am glad of it.

Peter. I was so quick, Mrs. Smith; and yet I talked for half an hour with the servant of the strange gentleman.

Mrs. Sm. You may talk; but don't tell any thing respecting me.

Peter. God forbid! no, indeed not I; I told old Tom "upon my soul and body," says I, "you may depend upon it, from my lips you never shall hear, that the money comes from Mrs. Smith."

Mrs. Sm. How stupid! But how is old Tom?

Peter. Very well, ma'am; he was just walking out for the first time.

Mrs. Sm. (Aside.) Heaven be thanked. Stay! Am I not childish? Do I not feel the same pleasure in doing a good action, which a debtor feels, who owes ten thousand pounds, and returns one guinea!

Peter. He said, everything, his health, and life, and happiness, he owed to your goodness. He is coming here to bring his own thanks.

Mrs. Sm. Dear Master Peter, do me one favour; and take care if Tom comes, don't let him come

up stairs; tell him I have no time; I am indisposed; or I am gone out.

Peter. Very well; and if he insists on coming up stairs, shall I set our great dog upon him?

Mrs. Sm. God forbid any harm should befall him!

Peter. Just as you please; otherwise I can assure you, Mrs. Smith, our Hercules is a terrible dog; he'll tear him to pieces in a minute.

Enter BITTERMAN.

Butt. Good morning; good morning, my charming, my dear Mrs. Smith! I am rejoiced in seeing you well: you seem to have got a letter; some news—from the French perhaps? Yes, yes, I had letters too, yesterday: there are some great things upon the carpet in the political world.

Mrs. Sm. You shou'd, by rights, know everything.

Butt. So I ought—So I do.—I know that, because, at least in the most capital towns in Europe, I have my certain correspondents.

Peter. In Paris, he formerly had an old acquaintance, a cobbler; and in Holland, another town in France, he had an Aunt.

Butt. (*With a commanding voice.*) I say, Peter—

Mrs. Sm. And yet I doubt, whether you know what will happen to-day, in this house.

Butt. In this house?—Extraordinary!—I not know?—I not know?—I know nothing at all; except that we shall kill a hog to-day.—

Peter. Yes, and a nice treat I shall have. The brown stone-horse, and—

Butt.

Bitt. Silence, Afs!

Peter. Again, indeed!—I may not speak one single word. *[Exit grumbling.]*

Mrs. Sm. Lord Santon will be here to-day.

Bitt. Who? What? Lord Santon? My lord and master?

Mrs. Sm. With my lady and family.—So says this letter.

Bitt. Now, don't joke.

Mrs. Sm. You know, Mr. Bitterman, I seldom am in a humour to do so.

Bitt. Peter! good heaven! Peter! His lordship, my Lord Santon—Dear me! Dear me! And here is nothing in order.—Peter! Peter!

Re-enter PETER.

Peter. What's the matter now, father?

Bitt. Immediately call all the servants together:—hurry to get the things ready—dust the windows and the pier glasses; her ladyship will want them sooner than me—get my Sunday wig—make as much haste as you can. *(Exit Peter slowly.)* What a delightful pleasure, to be favoured with his lordship's visit!—But unfortunately there is not room enough for the whole family.—The green room is full of potatoes.

Mrs. Sm. They will confine themselves.—His lordship is no lover of ceremony.

Bitt. *(With great bombast.)* Dear, charming Mrs. Smith! but where shall I put her ladyship's brother, Major Branley? I am sure he is coming with them.—Ah! now I recollect something, and that

that will suit Mr. Branley excellently well. You know the little cottage at the end of the park. That he may occupy.

Mrs. Sm. You forget, Mr. Bitterman, there lives the strange gentleman.

Bitt. Poh, what Stranger! Who has desired him to come here? He must remove. Draw in another county. Nobody knows where he comes from. Perhaps he's a spy—nobody knows any thing of him.

Mrs. Sm. True, Mr. Bitterman; but don't do any harm to this gentleman.—I have never seen him, but at a great distance; so that I cou'd not distinguish him; but to judge from what I hear of him, he must be a very benevolent man: he lives quietly and peacefully.

Bitt. So he does.

Mrs. Sm. He offends nobody.

Bitt. I can't say he does; but I will know who he is. He is such an oddity, that he will not stand still one moment to give an answer to a polite question. But if it happens that I meet him, all I can get from him is, "good day! good walk!"

Mrs. Sm. You forget his lordship.

Bitt. Egad, so I do. You see, Mrs. Smith, what plague and trouble one has with these mysterious unknown kind of people.

Mrs. Sm. I shall prepare myself, Mr. Bitterman; do you the same. [Exit.]

Bitt. That I will.—She did not understand my hint about mysterious and unknown persons; because
cause

cause Mrs. Smith is something of the unknown kind too; and I can't learn who she is, or how she came here.—Mrs. Smith is her name; but, lord! what signifies knowing only that, when there are so many Mrs. Smiths in the world? [*Exit.*

A C T II.

SCENE—*The same Room.*

BITTERMAN and PETER hold the Door wide open,
with many aukward Compliments.

[*Enter MAJOR BRANLEY.*

Bitt. Heavens! Am I so highly honoured as to behold the noble brother-in-law of the most noble and worthy Lord Santon, my good and excellent master?

Peter. And I too.

Maj. Bless my soul, what compliments. (*Aside.*) I am sure they are a set of stupid fellows. But I hope this is not a pattern of the whole community. (*To Bitterman;*) I am a soldier, Sir;—I make but few compliments, and wish people would do the same with me.

Bitt. Pray, pray, Sir, do not mention it—Notwithstanding we are in the country, we know something of good manners too.

Peter. Something too!

Maj. My brother has quitted the service: he intends to pass the remainder of his life in ease
and

and tranquillity with his family. He'll make this his residence.

Bitt. Oh, what a happiness! Now poor Bitterman; now thou shalt begin to live.

Peter. And so shall Peter!

Bitt. Is there any good news in town, most worthy Sir?

Maj. None, Sir! Tire some company—Ah! had I but staid at the inn I should have avoided their stupidity.

Bitt. I am very sorry—indeed I am, that I am not able to make your time pass more agreeably.

Peter. And so am I too.

Bitt. I don't know where Mrs. Smith stays—she is a woman with the most entertaining tongue.

Maj. Mrs. Smith! Who is she?

Bitt. Ay, dear me! hem—hem! I don't know any more of her than that she is—Mrs. Smith.

Peter. Nor I neither.

Bitt. None of my correspondents have ever mentioned any thing about her. She lives here in the capacity of a housekeeper; I think I hear her silver tongue—I'll send for her immediately.

Maj. Don't trouble yourself—I'd rather go there myself.

Bitt. Trouble, Sir! I am always your very obedient and most devoted servant.

[*Exit BITTERMAN and PETER, with many bows.*]

Maj. Now I dare say they'll send me an old woman, whose tongue will prate without ceasing. Oh, good Patience!

Enter

Enter Mrs. SMITH, bowing with an agreeable air: the Major answers the compliment.

Bram. By heaven ! she is not old—And in good truth she is far from being ugly. (*Aside.*)

Mrs. Sm. It gives me pleasure to be in company with the brother of my benefactor.

Bram. Madam, I am happy in embracing every introduction that leads to the friendship of Mrs. Smith.

Mrs. Sm. I suppose we are indebted to the fine weather for the unexpected favour of your's and his lordship's visit.

Bram. Not quite so, Madam. You know Lord Santon is indifferent to the weather—Hail, rain, or sunshine, summer or winter are equal to him ; if he finds in his house an everlasting summer ;—a good wife, sincere and happy friends, and a well-covered table.

Mrs. Sm. My Lord is an amiable epicure ; ever the same, always enjoying every minute of life, without possessing that affected something in his character, which is too often the natural appendage of high rank. He is without pride ; he regards not the star that glitters on the outside of the breast, if the brighter ornament of Virtue is not within.

Bram. He feels these benefits, and I suppose he will enjoy them here. I fear only lest he should not be able to amuse himself in this continual festivity, to which we are unaccustomed in London.

Mr. Sm. I think, whoever brings an innocent heart with him, in his retirement, is sure to heighten

every pleasure that the rural scenery of Nature can produce.

Bran. This is the first time I have ever heard solitude praised by the fair sex. Has solitude already a long time been favoured with so amiable a defender?

Mrs. Sm. I have been here these three years.

Bran. And has not a thought, nor a wish intruded to see London—the fashionable world—assemblies—plays, or other amusements?

Mrs. Sm. Never.

Bran. This is the proof of either a very thoughtless, or a very refined, soul. A single glance has sufficiently convinced me to which of the two classes you belong.

Mrs. Sm. (*With a sigh.*) There is perhaps a third class! (*Alto.*)

Enter PETER, in haste.

Peter. He shan't come in—dear me! Mrs. Smith is not at home—I cannot prevent his coming.

Mrs. Sm. Who?

Peter. Old Tom—Look, Ma'am, had you permitted me to let loose our great dog, he would not have come up stairs. [*Exit.*]

Enter TOM.

Tom. I must—I must

Mrs. Sm. (*With confusion.*) I have no time now, dear good old man. You see I am not alone.

Tom. I am sure this gentleman will excuse it;—perhaps to-morrow I shall no longer be able to speak my thanks.

Bran. What are your wishes, old man?

Tom.

Tom. Only to thank that Lady, Sir. Benefits received are burthens, if we are deprived of the means of acknowledging them.

Bran. Permit him, Madam, to give vent to his heart. And why should not I be witness of a scene, which shews, more than words, how nobly you spend your time in solitude. Speak, old man, speak.

Tom. Oh, Madam! that every word of mine could shower down blessings on your head. I was abandoned in my hut;—stretched on the bed of sickness;—burning fever deprived me of my senses;—the wind and rain pierced thro' my miserable dwelling;—without covering and without food. In this melancholy situation, Sir, the angel you here behold, slept in to my relief;—administered medicine to me; gave me cloaths and money; and spoke words of sweet comfort to my afflicted mind. I am restored to health, and after thanking heaven, I am come here to pour out the effusions of gratitude.

Mrs. Sm. Enough, good old man,—enough.

Tom. And the strange melancholy Gentleman, who lives at the corner of the park; he gave me a purse with thirty guineas! I can now redeem my son. Ah, Madam! I am happy, too happy; and when you pass by my hut, and see me with my child, what must you feel, when you can say: “Behold! this is my work.” I have done! I have done!

[*Exit.*

(*A short silence.*)

Bran. What a woman! My heart feels, for the first

first time emotions hitherto unknown to me. I am surprised ! *(Aside.)*

Mrs. Sm. I think, Major, my Lord's horses are not so swift as yours.

Bran. I am to thank his absence, Madam, for a pleasure greater than any which I ever experienced.

Mrs. Sm. This, Sir, is a satire on mankind. To men of your rank, such scenes should not be scarce.

Bran. Indeed, Madam, I did not expect to have made such a charming acquaintance to-day.—When Mr. Bitterman told me your name ; who could suppose, that with so simple a name, such a superior soul was united. Excuse my curiosity ; have you been, or are you married ?

Mrs. Sm. *(Sorrowfully ;)* I have been married.

Bran. You are a widow then ?

Mrs. Sm. Pray, Sir ! there are strings in our life, which when touch'd produce a painful melody.—I believe, *(more cheerfully,)* I must begin like Mr. Bitterman, who is a very great politician, to ask for some news.

Bran. I had rather know how, Madam, to interest your feelings.—Perhaps you were not born in town ?

Mrs. Sm. No, Sir.

Bran. In what part of the island ?

Mrs. Sm. England is my country !

Bran. I perceive that you have the power of veiling every thing but your charms.

Enter Lord SANTON, his Lady; WILLIAM, a child about five years old; BITTERMAN, and PETER.

Lord S. (Embracing Mrs. Smith.) Here Mrs. Smith, here I bring you another invalid, who will join your standard for ever.

Mrs. Sm. Welcome my Lord! my Lady, you will then join the standard of solitude.

Lord S. Ay: solitude seldom is where I am.

Lady S. Have you been prepared for our visit, dear Mrs. Smith?

Mrs. Sm. We have not; but my thoughts were never from my dear benefactor.

(Lord S. speaks with Bitterman.—The Child goes to Mrs. Smith, who slops and caresses it! while melancholy appears painted on her countenance.)

Mrs. Sm. Oh, the sweet child.

Bran. (Aside to Lady S.) Pray sister, what diamond is this, which shines so brilliantly in this part of the world?

Lady S. Are ye caught?—Ha! ha!

Bran. Nay, pri'thee answer.

Lady S. Her name is Mrs. Smith.

Bran. I know that: but—

Lady S. More I don't know myself.

Bran. Be serious, sister, be serious.

Lady S. I cannot now. Come, William, we will go to dress. The journey has made me such a figure that I am not fit to be seen.

[Exit with the Child.]

Bran. (Aside.) I am in a wonderful agitation; I must

I must take a turn in the open air to recover myself. [Exit.

Lord S. (Sitting down.) Well, Bitterman; you are the same comical fellow as ever.

Bitt. And always your lordship's most obedient humble servant.

Peter. Most obedient.

Lord S. And how goes every thing in the country?

Bitt. Heaven be thank'd, well. Our park is in the best state; and every thing is fit to comfort your Lordship. An hermitage; obelisks; ruins; and so forth;—and a most remarkable bridge I built upon the river, that will please your Lordship, I'm sure.

Lord S. Let's go and see it. Mrs. Smith, I shall take the liberty of retiring for a short time, I am so stiff with riding, that it will do me good to take a little walk.

[Exeunt Lord S. BITT. and PETER.]

Mrs. Sm. (After a long pause.) What is it that shook my frame so much? my heart bleeds: my tears afford me no relief. Methought I had already got the better of grief: I assumed the appearance of that gaiety which once formed part of my charms, but the sight of the child has awakened all my painful sensations; and his name is William—Oh! the very sound was a dagger to my heart: I once had a William too; if he lives (*sighing*) he must be of the same age: God knows where William my son, and Fanny my daughter are: (*greatly agitated.*) Who knows but they are now calling
down

down vengeance on their mother! (*talking about.*) Why, painful Fancy, why dost thou torment me? Why paint to my imagination the helpless cries of my unfortunate children? In sickness, in trouble they are left to the mercy of rude hirelings, abandon'd by their mother! Ah! what a wretch; what a miserable mother am I! And that I shou'd see this child just now—just to-day—when, more than ever, I stand in need of a veil to conceal the gloom which hangs on my brow!

Enter PETER running and crying, out of breath.

Peter. Oh dear, dear! Lord! heaven!

Mrs. Sm. What's the matter?—

Peter. Oh dear, dear! his Lordship's fallen into the river!

Mrs. Sm. Good God! Is it possible?

Peter. His Lordship is drowned! Oh! Oh!

Mrs. Sm. Heaven! do not cry so loud: spare my Lady.

Peter. Shou'dn't I cry at such a misfortune? Oh his Lordship! his Lordship!

Enter Lady SANTON and Major BRANLEY, on different sides.

Both. What is the matter?

Mrs. Sm. An accident, my Lady: I suppose of no consequence: his Lordship has been a little too near the water and wetted himself.

Peter. Wetted himself! dear, dear, it is all over his head.

Lady S. Good heavens!

Brar. I'll fly to his assistance.

Mrs. Sm. Stay, Sir; I am sure it is not of so much

consequence as Peter makes it. The misfortune has happened, but he is well again : is it not so, Peter ?

Peter. Indeed, he is not dead ; no, that I can't say ; but he had a narrow escape !

Bran. Speak, young man, speak.

Mrs. Sm. You accompanied his Lordship ?

Peter. Exactly so.

Mrs. Sm. Into the Park ?

Peter. Yes.

Mrs. Sm. Well, and what then ?

Peter. Oh dear, dear ! We went very comfortably along the river, 'till we came to the Chinese bridge, which father built from the wood of the rotten hen coops. His Lordship went upon it, and was admiring the situation : resting against the rails, and his noble person being rather of a noble size, it broke in, and his Lordship fell into the river.

Lady S. Oh, I am so alarmed !

Mrs. S. But he instantly was saved ?

Peter. Not by me : no such thing !

Mrs. S. Your father, perhaps ?

Peter. Not he ! but we cried so loud, I'm sure they could easily hear us in the village. Only hear : Suddenly the strange Gentleman, who lives at the corner of the park, came running, directly from the hill : at one jump was in the river—took fast hold of his Lordship, and brought him safe on shore.

Lady S. May Heaven bless that Gentleman !

Lady S. Where are they now ?

Peter. They were just coming up, when I left them : I saw the servants running with a great boat for his Lordship.

Mrs. S.

Mrs. Sm. The Strange Gentleman too?

Peter. No indeed: he ran away as fast as he could: and wou'd not accept of any thanks, saying, that to preserve the life of a fellow-creature if he could, was no more than his duty.

Lady S. Blessings on him.

Enter Lord SANTON, BITTERMAN and ANN.

Lady S. My lord, how happy am I to see you!

Lord S. Three steps from me, my Lady! don't you see I am quite wet. But never mind, a foldier must be accustomed to danger. In reality, it might have had very bad consequences, if the generous stranger—Who is this man? Bitterman spoke a great deal of nonsense about him.

Mrs. Sm. We do not know who he is. He came here about three months ago, and hired the little house at the corner of the park: he speaks with nobody, and sees no one. I saw him once upon the hill, but he was so far off, that I could not distinguish his face. As I hear, he detests mankind, but does infinite good in private.

Lord S. Ann, go to this stranger, and beg his company to supper. Tell him he will come into the house of a grateful friend. Come, children, I must dress, and then we'll dine:—(To Bitterman.) I must say this for you and your boy, that you can holla, so that I could hear it under water: but as to your Chinese bridge, send it to the devil.

[*Exeunt Lord and Lady SANTON, BRANLEY, and Mrs. SMITH.*]

Ann. Well, Mr. Bitterman, you were a great builder indeed—ha! ha! ha!—with your Chinese bridge.

Bitt. Dear, most honourable Miss, one must be as economical as possible.

Ann. But why did not you jump into the river to save his Lordship?

Bitt. God forbid!—I should sink like lead.—No, no, I did exactly what was proper; and though I would willingly go into the flames for his Lordship, yet I consider the danger of such a thing, twice before I sacrifice myself once on account of another.

Ann. Ha! ha! ha!—Well, well, I dare say he would do the same for you: ha! ha!— [Exit.]

Bitt. Only look, Peter, how she laughs. That's one of the town wenches, I dare say.

Peter. Ha! ha! ha! [Exit.]

Bitt. How! dare you laugh too?

[Follows him angry.]

ACT III.

SCENE—*The Cottage.*

The STRANGER sitting upon a Bench in thought.—

After a Pause enter FRANCIS.

Fran. Sir, dinner is ready.

Stran. I have no inclination to eat.

Fran. Young peas and a chicken.

Stran. Eat them yourself if you like.

Fran. Are you not hungry, Sir?

Stran. No.

Fran. The heat of the weather has taken away your appetite.

[Exit.]

Stran. Yes.

Fran. Well, I'll take care of it; perhaps you'll like it for supper.

Stran. Perhaps so.

Fran. (*After a pause.*) May I speak, Sir.

Stran. Speak, Francis,

Fran. You did a noble action to-day.

Stran. How?

Fran. You saved a man's life.

Stran. Poh—Silence!

Fran. And do you know whose life you saved, at the risk of your own?

Stran. Pray do not teaze me.

Fran. Lord Santon's life, Sir!—The owner of all the estates around us.

Stran. He was a man; that's enough.

Fran. Oh noble, twice noble soul! Such a brave and generous action would draw a tear from the most callous, most unfeeling bosom.

Stran. You are as feeble as a woman.

Fran. By heaven—Fate is unjust to suffer so good, so generous a man, to——

Stran. (*Angry.*) Go, flatterer!

Fran. No, no, it is not flattery: it comes from the bottom of my heart. I cannot, it is not in my nature to be silent, when I observe the benefits you do; when I consider, how you make the sufferings of others your own, and yet for all that you are not happy. Oh, my heart bleeds.

Stran. (*Touched.*) Francis, I thank you.

Fran. Dear Sir, don't take it amiss! Perhaps thick blood is the only reason of your melancholy.

I once heard from a very eminent phyfician that melancholy is in the blood!

Stran. Good Francis, that is not my cafe.

Fran. Unfortunate then? Oh! oh!

Stran. I fuffer innocently.

Fran. (*Taking his hand.*) Ah, Sir, how I pity you!

Stran. But, Francis, there will be repofe fomewhere.

Fran. God grant there may.

Enter ANN.

Ann. (*To Francis*;) Give me leave, Sir; are you the ftrange Gentleman who faved his Lordfhip's life?

Fran. That noble Gentleman is he.

Ann. *Look*! Strangers, how Santon fends her compliments, and begs the honour of your company this evening.

Stran. I thank her, I will comply.

Fran. But you will come?

Stran. I fhall not.

Fran. I am fure you will not, Sir, without giving me a promife to come. My Lordfhip is penetrated with gratitude.

Stran. It was done with pleafure.

Fran. I thank you, Sir, very much. And I muft tell you, that there are fome of our houfes, my Lady, who fhould have been very anxious to have the honour of making your acquaintance.

Ann. (*Aside.*) A very abrupt fellow indeed ! I'll see how far I can succeed with the servant. Good friend, why don't you look at me ?

Fran. Because I rather like to see green trees than green eyes.

Ann. (*In a passion.*) Green eyes ! who told you my eyes were green ? Upon my honour ! Some time ago Major Sandy, Lieutenant Cumbal, and Captain—Captain—thing—thing—I don't remember his name, made verses upon me ; but I have too liberal an education to be affronted ;—only tell me, who is your master ?

Fran. A man.

Ann. Certainly no woman ; else he would be more civil, and would not be served by such a fellow. But what is his name ?

Fran. They call'd him after his father.

Ann. And he was——

Fran. Married !

Ann. (*Ironical ;*) With a woman, perhaps ?

Fran. Perhaps so.

Ann. Good friend, I don't know who your master is, but I know what you are.

Fran. Well ?

Ann. An impudent ass. [*Exit.*

Fran. Thank ye, charming girl. Certain it is, if we please women, we are *bonnes comme il faut* ; on the contrary, we are Asses.

Re-enter STRANGER.

Stran. Is she gone ?

Fran. Yes, Sir.

Stran.

Stran. Francis, we must go too.

Fran. Where?

Stran. Where God pleases.

Fran. I will follow you.

Stran. (*Taking his hand affectionately.*) Every where?

Fran. In the grave.

Stran. Would to heaven it were so, there is repose.

Fran. Repose dwells every where: let storm-blow in every quarter, provided no tempest reigns here: (*pointing to his breast.*)—But why must we go, Sir?

Stran. I am not a wild beast to be gazed at.

Fran. Nay, you must take it as you like, Sir: but meanwhile I am not at all surprized that a man shews civility, whose life you have saved. I am sure they won't invite you a second time.

Stran. They think all is paid in giving me a supper. Oh, Francis! you are my only friend: we will go: we will do every thing to dispel the lowering cloud, with which the dreadful sentence of Fate, has overshadowed my brow. Look there:—don't you see a Gentleman with a Lady? Oh! they will torment me to death! Let us go. *Exit.*

Fran. And I'll begin to pack up. (*Going.*)

Enter Lady SASTON and Mr. BRANLEY.

Bran. I dare say that's his servant. Pray can we have the pleasure of seeing your master?

Fran. No, Sir.

Bran. For a few moment only.

Exit.

Fran. He has locked himself up in his room.

Lady S. Tell him a Lady waits upon him.

Fran. Then I'm sure he won't come at all.

Lady S. Does he hate our sex?

Fran. He hates mankind in general. I dare say he hates your sex not less.

Lady S. Your master, it seems, does not understand etiquette.

Fran. It seems so. But he knows how to save a man's life, even at the hazard of his own.

Bran. And that's worth much more than etiquette; but we do not come to pay him simple compliments; we wish to shew ourselves grateful for his generosity.

Fran. He does-n't like it.

Bran. A singular character.

Fran. Who has no other comfort in the world than a peaceful and retired life.

Lady S. He seems to have quarrelled with Fate.

Fran. May be so.

Lady S. Perhaps the consequence of a duel; or he has been unfortunate in love.

Fran. Perhaps so.

Lady S. Pray what is his name!

Fran. I wish I knew myself.

Lady S. How! don't you know his name?—
Don't you know your own master?

Fran. Oh I know him very well; that is to say, I know his heart, his soul! Do you think you know a man, if you know his name?

Lady S. Well, I confess myself in the wrong. Pray who are you?

Fran. Your most obedient servant. [Exit.]

Lady S. A singular fellow; but it is the fashion now for every one to distinguish himself by some singularity in this world. One sails round the globe; another creeps into huts. Come, brother, let us find Lord Saxton.

Fran. Before we go, a few words, Sister.—I am in love!

Lady S. For the fourth time.—Very pretty.

Fran. No, Sister, for the first time seriously. Pray tell me who is this Mrs. Smith. Be serious now; this is no time to laugh.

Lady S. I cannot pretend to know Mrs. Smith any more than you do. But what I know I will relate. It may be now about three years since she came to me, with all the grace, with all the modesty,—which captivated my brother. But her countenance was clouded with a melancholy, with an anxiety of mind, which she would not conceal. She offered herself to be my servant; implored me to save thereby an unhappy creature. I fought in vain for the cause of her troubles; but I every day more and more discovered her excellent heart. From my servant she became my friend. Accompanying me once upon a walk in the country, and looking down with which I entered hung on the charm of her tale, I felt the excitement upon my breast. Since that time she has remained here, and I have been daily conversing with her, and I know that she is the most virtuous and amiable, and good creature that ever was put into existence. I have seen her in every possible situation of life, and I have seen her in every possible situation of life. [Exit.]

Lady S. Only recollect, my good Brother, you have forgot one very material thing.

Bran. What's that?

Lady S. That she must like you too.

Bran. To be sure; and that is the reason why I wish your assistance. Oh, Sister, speak to her. She is the only creature that could have made such an impression on my heart.

Lady S. Well! I will speak to her. I will do what I can for you. But here she comes.

Enter Lord SANTON and Mrs. SMITH.

Lord S. Upon my word, Mrs. Smith, you are a most excellent walker. I am quite tired.

Mrs. S. Custom, my Lord, is every thing—I have no doubt, that after having exercised yourself in such walks one month, you will be able to repeat them without difficulty.

Lady S. We have been hunting after you this half hour.

Lord S. I dare say you have, my dear. If I go with Mrs. Smith she is sure to engage all my attention. We went upon the hill, from whence we could see the village. A most charming view it is, and rendered more so by the manner of Mrs. Smith's describing it.

Lady S. I shall begin to be jealous.

Lord S. That you may, my dear. But now I'll leave you alone. Branley and I will try to find a place to rest in. I am excessively tired. (*Looking about.*) Is n't that Peter?—Peter! Peter!

Enter PETER.

Lord S. Fetch us some ale and bread and cheese. Branley, come with me, I have many things to tell you. [*Exit* Lord S. BRANLEY and PETER.]

Lady S. (*After short silence;*) Well, Mrs. Smith, may I ask you how you like the Gentleman who has just quitted us?

Mrs. S. Which of the two, my Lady?

Lady S. Why you may be sure I would not ask you how my husband pleases you. No! no! I mean my brother.

Mrs. Sm. He seems worthy of being your brother.

Lady S. Thank ye, thank ye. I'll write this compliment in my pocket-book.

Mrs. Sm. Without flattery, my Lady, I think him a good man.

Lady S. And a fine man?

Mrs. Sm. (*Very indifferently.*) Oh, yes!

Lady S. Ha, ha! That oh yes! sounds just as tho' you had said, Oh, no! But I must tell you, Mrs. Smith, he thinks you a very fine woman! What can you answer now?

Mrs. Sm. What should I answer? Mockery cannot come from your lips, therefore it must be jest; and I am not gay to-day.

Lady S. Indeed, Mrs. Smith, what I say is fact.

Mrs. Sm. I am at a loss what to say. But no, no, I'll not conceal a thought. (*Taking my Lady's hand affectionately.*) There was a time when I thought myself handsome. But ah! Sorrow has withered the blossom of youth; it is conscience and

and the self-approving smile which form real beauty. The chain by which we fetter good men is the possession of a virtuous soul.

Lady S. Indeed! 'Wou'd heaven had given every one such a heart then, as shines through your eyes!

Mrs. Sm. Oh! God forbid!

Lady S. What is it you say?

Mrs. Sm. (Aside.) Ah, wretched thought! Like lightning thro' the inmost veins, pierces the memory of a crime thro' the soul.

Lady S. Mrs. Smith!

Mrs. Sm. I am an unfortunate creature! The sufferings which have attended on three years' sincere repentance, give me not one moment's rest.—Spare me, my Lady.

Lady S. What can this mean, my friend?—Your pain, your sufferings, seem the produce of your imagination.

Mrs. Sm. No! no! The memory of my guilt is insupportable; and the greatest proof I can give of true repentance is, the confession of a secret, to the concealment of which I owe all the kindness I have received till now. But it must be—(*oppress'd*) Did you ever hear of one Lady Montale?

Lady S. (Always.) Sir Henry Montale's wife? I believe I have; I remember now: she render'd a good man very unhappy.

Mrs. Sm. A good man indeed!

Lady S. She eloped from her husband, with a very vile young man.

Mrs. S. Oh, my Lady; leave me, leave me; grant me only one small spot in which to die.

Lady S. Good heaven, Mrs. Smith!

Mrs. Sm. (*Covering her face.*) I am this wretched being.

Lady S. (*Astonish'd.*) Ha! is it possible! cou'd she dissimulate so long? but she is unfortunate; she is miserable! do not weep; my husband, my brother are not present: this scene will tell no tales: I promise you secrecy and silence.

Mrs. S. (*Weeping.*) Alas, my Lady! my conscience, my conscience never will be silent. I am that wretch who eloped; and altho' I returned and saw my error just before the purpose of my deceiver was accomplish'd; yet even the elopement from so kind a husband is a most frightful crime.

Lady S. I will not forsake you. No, no! I have observ'd your behaviour for these three years: your silent sufferings and your sincere repentance. It is true they do not cancel the crime; but my heart never will refuse a place to you, where you may repent the loss of a husband; I am afraid, an irreparable loss.

Mrs. Sm. Irreparable! oh!

Lady S. Poor woman!

Mrs. Sm. I had children too!

Lady S. Oh, enough!

Mrs. Sm. God only knows whether they live.

Lady S. Miserable mother!

Mrs. Sm. He! an amiable, virtuous husband. Does he live, or is he dead!

Lady S.

Lady S. You despair !

Mrs. Sm. To me he's dead !

Lady S. Frightful repentance !

Mrs. Sm. I had a good and aged father.

Lady S. Oh, make haste, and finish your sad tale.

Mrs. Sm. My dishonour murder'd him !

Lady S. Alas ! the revenge of virtue is dreadful.

Mrs. Sm. (*Weeping aloud, covering her face with her handkerchief.*) And I still live !

Lady S. Who could hate this true penitent ?
(*Aside ;—Embracing her.*) Your fall was a dream,
a madness ; the impulse of a moment : within
your heart there is no guile.

Mrs. Sm. Every attempt to lessen the horror
of my crime plants a dagger in my soul. My con-
science nevertorments me more, than when I strive
to seek excuses for my folly. No ! no ! I cannot
throw a veil over this black action ; and the only
sorrowful repose of my heart is, to acknowledge
myself guilty without the least palliation.

Lady S. This is true repentance !

Mrs. Sm. Had you but known my husband—
Oh memory, recall the time of our first inter-
view—this excellent, this noble man. I was
then eighteen.

Lady S. How long were you married ?

Mrs. S. I was three years his wife. Oh, and
in the moment of my fatal fall, even then no better
man existed. My Seducer, the cause of my ruin,
was far below my husband : Sir Henry, it is true,
did not flatter me so much, and refused me trifles,
which

which my pride demanded; the idle gratifications which he withheld from me were supplied by my betrayer, and I was wicked enough to trust for an instant, to his deceitful representations; to follow him, who—but enough! I return'd, my husband was gone with my children, nobody knew where: my father was lying in his coffin: I fled from my home: in vain I call'd for my children. Alas! the sufferings of those moments no language is able to describe.

Lady S. Do not cherish the dismal remembrance.

Mrs. Sm. I flew to a noble soul, who gave me comfort; and who, let me still hope, will not forsake me.

Lady S. Be assured I will not.—Your tears shall flow upon my bosom.—Oh! were I able to bring hope again into your heart!—but ah!—My Lord approaches.—Cheer up, my friend; assume another countenance.

Mrs. Sm. Oh, mark of guilt! Why can I not live and weep alone! Oh, my Lady! my only hope is in you.

Enter Lord SANTON, BRANLEY, and PETER eating.

Lord S. Come, ladies: the evening is coming on. We must be going. But tell me, What have you done with the strange Gentleman?

Bran. He has refused our invitation.

Lord S. A strange man! But I am determined to have an opportunity to convey him my thanks.—Brother Branley, will you have the goodness,

ness, after accompanying my Lady home, to return and invite him yourself.

Bran. Certainly, my Lord.

Lord S. (*Seeing Peter eat.*) On my conscience ! you seem to have your mouth pretty full.

Peter. To be sure, my most worthy Lord. Didn't you desire me to bring something for us to eat ?

Lord S. Blockhead ! ha ! ha ! ha ! I meant my brother and myself. Come, Ladies, come.

[*Exit all but Peter.*]

Peter. Now I will appeal to every honest man to be my judge, if three are together, and his Lordship says, " Fetch something for *us* to eat," whether I am meant or not ? In future I find I must understand every thing by the rule of contraries.

[*Exit.*]

A C T. IV.

SCENE—*The Cottage.*

Enter Francis. (*Eating bread and cheese.*) When I was a waiter in London, dear me, what a merry fellow I then was. Cards and the dice were my amusements from morning to night, in humble imitation of the gentleman on whom I had the honour of waiting. And yet I had no taste for any thing ;—no appetite for enjoyment. To my splendid dishes, happiness was wanting ; to the best wine, the relish of a quiet conscience. Now all is altered ;—bread and cheese satisfy my hunger ;
and

and an innocent heart satisfies my conscience. But there's somebody coming again.—P' faith I can never be alone! *(Going.)*

Enter BRANLEY.

Bran. Stop, friend.—

Fran. Friend!—Dear me, what a mockery of friendship! Am I his friend already? *(Aside.)*

Bran. I wish to see your master.

Fran. It can't be, it is impossible, Sir!

Bran. Why?

Fran. Because he has lock'd himself up, and forbidden me to call him.

Bran. *(Offering him money.)* Take this:—tell him a Gentleman wishes to see him.

Fran. I don't want money.

Bran. Well, at least tell him I am here.

Fran. What will that avail? I shall be scolded, and you'll have a refusal.

Bran. Tell him, I wish to have the pleasure of seeing him but for a few minutes. I'll not take up his time:—say what you can to persuade him to come. If your master is a man of the least goodbreeding, he'll not let me stand here in vain.

Fran. Well, I'll try. *[Exit.]*

Bran. But when he appears, how shall I treat him?—I was never yet in company with a misanthrope. An open friendly countenance cannot displease him. Not too serious—not too lively; with such appearances we may get thro' the world pretty well.

Enter the STRANGER behind BRANLEY.

Stran. What is your pleasure, Sir?

Bran. (*Turns round;*) I beg your pardon, Sir.—
Good God! Henry! (*With sudden astonishment.*)

Stran. O Heavens! my friend? (*They embrace.*)

Bran. Is it you indeed,—dearest Henry?

Stran. I—yes—I am Henry. But let me rest
one moment; the surprise is too great.

Bran. Are you my Henry? And gracious
heaven, what is the matter! How are you changed!
Is this alteration occasioned by grief?

Stran. Oh, Branley! I have not seen a friend, save
my good servant Francis, these three tedious years
past.—I have forgotten the language of a friend.

Bran. Henry, Henry, my brother Henry!—
what evil has Fate inflicted on you?

Stran. The hand of Misfortune lies heavy upon
me. But how came you here? What brought
you to me? What would you have with me?

Bran. Wonderful! I was staying here, and study-
ing in what manner I should address the strange
melancholy Gentleman; when, to my astonish-
ment, I find him my friend, the gallant Henry!

Stran. Did not you know that I occupied this
hut?

Bran. All I knew was, that you this morning
saved the life of my brother-in-law. A thankful
family wishes to see you in its circle. You re-
fused coming to the servant; therefore I was sent
to give more weight to the invitation. This is
the accident which presents me again to my old
friend Henry; the friend of my youthful days,
whom my heart has long wished to see.

Stran. Yes, I am your friend; I love you sin-
cerely;

cerely ;—the affection which my heart ever felt is not in the least diminished. But if this assurance be of any value to you,—leave me, Branley, leave your injured Henry. The sight of a friend awakens the long lost feelings of society.—But I must no more converse with mankind. I must steel my heart against the allurements of friendship and of pleasure.

Bran. Whatever I hear, whatever I see of you, is a vision. You are Henry ; but these are not the eyes that enchanted our London girls, that gave life to all our companies ?

Stran. You forget—I am seven years older.

Bran. Where is the open countenance, which has stolen so many hearts ?

Stran. Stolen hearts ! Ha ! ha ! ha !

Bran. Oh, heaven ! I would rather wish never to hear you laugh, than in this tone. Henry, my friend, what is the cause of all this ?

Stran. Common events—accidents you hear of in every corner of the street. But, Branley, ask no more questions ; if you wish me not to hate you, as much as I detest the rest of mankind.

Bran. Fy ! how could Fate spoil a man thus ! Recall the feelings of past days of joy. Let your heart become warm again ; remember that a friend is near you. Remember the lively moments in America ; when we enjoyed, in the midst of ferocious war, the friendly harmony of two sensible souls. In one of those moments you gave me this ring. Do you remember ?

Stran. Oh, yes !

Bran.

Bran. Am I now become unworthy of your confidence?

Stran. No, no!

Bran. Have we been friends only in lively circles, or at the card-table?—Have we not shared dangers of death? You know in the last heavy battle—Henry, I am sorry that I must help your memory—Do you know this wound?

Stran. Dear Branley, it proceeded from a blow destined for my head. Oh! I do not forget it: but you little think, my friend, that in preserving my life you made me but an ill present.

Bran. How so? Tell me I beseech you!

Stran. You cannot help me.

Bran. Let me at least partake your sorrows, Henry.

Stran. That I will not. My sorrows are buried in my bosom. The more they are known, the more am I agonised.

Bran. Oh, Henry! What means that look? Fy for shame! A man of your understanding—of your courage—of your talents—thus to bend under the frown of Fate! Were you plundered of your riches? Were you in imprisonment?

Stran. No, Branley, no! Tho' I once thought it indifferent, what mankind might think of me, yet, at this moment I feel it is not quite so. I cannot suffer you to leave him, who so highly esteems you, without knowing how Fate has murdered all his joys on earth. To make as short as I can of my story,—You know, Branley, I left you at the end of the American war, and hasten'd to my

mother country. You know my heart was good, but my language was perhaps too rough, my remarks too scrutinizing. A thousand charming pictures did imagination paint, of that felicity my heart was in want of. But instead of being beloved by my acquaintance, I was hated because I spoke my sentiments, as they rose spontaneously in my bosom. This conduct hurt me. I was then silent. I tried condescension; flattered every one; and sought the confidence of mankind; but without success. I therefore retired, and lived in a corner of London. You knew the officers of our regiment: we were most of us young men of great fortune, but without experience; which in that war we bought dearly, by shedding the blood of our fellow-creatures. There was one, an old brave officer, whom we all esteemed.—You knew old Lieutenant Dadlon, in whom we confided in the field of battle, and in company, as our father. This officer remained Lieutenant, while a rich boy was promoted over his head. I exclaimed violently against so flagrant an act of injustice. In my passion I dared to censure the king.—I was tried, and imprisoned. After having obtained my freedom, I retired into the country.—I chose Yorkshire, where I could best enjoy the remnant of my life. All went well.—I found friends who flattered me on account of my money; who drank my wine freely: whom I fed plentifully at my table. At last I found a wife too; a harmless, innocent creature.—Oh, how I loved her!—Then, then I fancied myself happy.—She gave me a son and a daughter.

daughter: both were stamped with the charms of their mother.—Ah, how I loved her! how dear was she to my heart! (*much moved*,) her children how good, and how charming!—(*After a pause*;) Well Branley, my history will soon be at an end. One of my friends, whom I thought the most honest, robbed me of half my fortune. I soon forgot that loss, because happiness wants but little. There came another with the countenance of a lamb, whom I trusted much—whom I assisted—recommended—nourished! This man seduced my wife, and eloped with her!—Is not all this enough to banish me from the poisoned society of mankind?

Bran. Is it possible?—I have you become a misanthrope, because you had a faithless wife?

Stran. Ah, Branley! you seem not to know what an injury the heart feels, when dishonoured by the being we most love. She was a sweet woman! Still, still, I feel for her! The charms of her temper left an eternal impression on my soul.

Bran. And where is she?

Stran. I know not.

Bran. And your children?

Stran. I have sent them to a good old woman in this neighbourhood, who I suppose is honest because she is stupid.

Bran. Another misanthropic sarcasm on mankind.

Stran. I have not seen my children these three years.—Their smiles would wound my callous breast. I will see no man. Had not my education made it necessary I would not have a servant.

Bran.

Bran. Come, come, Henry, enter again, into the society of men; and cheer up your dull countenance. You must go with me: I want you: I am going to take a wife.

Stran. I wish you joy. Oh! a wife, if good, is the masterpiece of heaven!

Bran. You shall see her. Come, Henry, my family is anxious to see you.

Stran. To see me in company! Have I not said enough?

Bran. You have, but I assure you, you would offend against the most common rules of civility, were you to refuse this visit to my brother. To do a good action and seek no thanks is noble; but studiously to avoid the expressions of gratitude is mere affectation.

Stran. It spoils my repose to be one moment amongst men.

Bran. Do what you please to-morrow, but to-day come with me.

Stran. No, no!

Bran. Not, if you were able to lay the foundation of your friend's happiness?

Stran. (*Moved.*) How can you ask that, Branley? but let me hear!

Bran. You must be my counsellor, and plead my Love-cause with Mrs. Smith. It is true my sister undertook to speak to her, but her speech is partial. Mrs. Smith will believe much more from your mouth. Well, Henry, you will not refuse it?

Stran. With one condition, then.

Bran. What is it?

Stran. That you do not prevent me from departing to-morrow.

Bran. Whither ?

Stran. Where I may remain unknown !

Bran. You're a strange man ! but I promise it. Perhaps your ideas will be altered for the better by to-morrow morning. Come—

Stran. I must prepare.

Bran. I expect you then in a few minutes ; till then, good-bye.

Stran. I'll keep my word. [Exit BRANLEY.

(Stranger walks up and down—his mind seems in agitation. At last he stands still.)

Enter FRANCIS.

Stran. Francis !

Fran. Sir !

Stran. To-morrow we shall travel.

Fran. If you please, Sir.

Stran. Perhaps to America.

Fran. It's all the same to me, Sir, as long as I am with you.

Stran. (*Much touch'd.*) Thank you, Francis ! thank you ! ah, Francis, you are my only real friend, the partaker of my sorrows ! but perhaps we shall meet better days : perhaps another world may restore me the repose which mankind has robb'd me of here. Thither then will I fly, far from my dear country. In Europe I have lost my happiness ; my All. The new world can take no more than the remnant of my riches. To-morrow, Francis, do you hear ? be as early as possible : pay what I owe here, and let us be gone.

Fran.

Fran. Excellent !

Stran. But before we go, I have something for you to do, Francis : Go down in the village : take a chaise, and make all speed to Enfield : you may be back before it is dark : I'll give you a letter to a poor old woman whom I know ; there you will find two children : they are my children.

Fran. Your children ?

Stran. Take them : put them into the chaise and bring them to me.

Fran. Your children ?

Stran. Yes, my children ! Is that any thing extraordinary ?

Fran. I am not surpris'd at your having children ; I am only surpris'd, that after having been three years in your service, I have never heard you speak a syllable of them.

Stran. To talk much of our own children is folly.

Fran. There is a difference between speaking much, and speaking nothing at all.

Stran. Don't trouble me with questions : go in and make ready ; I'll follow you, and write the letter.

[Exit FRANCIS.]

Stran. I will take them with me : I will accustom myself to their smiles : these innocent creatures shall not be spoiled, either by philanthropy or a passion : they shall amuse themselves in a barren Island, and do nothing : it is better to do nothing than to do wrong. Fool that I was, to be persuaded to go into company again ! it will spoil my comfort for a fortnight to come. Well, after having borne so much, why shouldn't I, to serve my friend,

friend, write one black hour more in the journal of my life? [Exit.

SCENE—*A Room with a Folding Door.*

Enter ANN, in a passion.

Ann. No, my Lady! if you intend to lock yourself up here in this part of the world, I am your most obedient; I am not born for this peasant-like life: I am accustomed to something quite different. Indeed it is astonishing! there is not one footman, or fine officer, that troubles his head about me, and I cannot bear that Mrs. Smith—Oh! she is so proud, I am sick at the sight of her!

Enter BITTERMAN.

Bitt. Ay, ay! Why sick; who has done you any harm, my dear pretty Miss?

Ann. Done harm to me? nobody; I'm not so soon hurt; notwithstanding certain indifferent persons ridicule certain other persons. Don't you think, Mr. Bitterman, Mrs. Smith looks as yellow as if she had the jaundice.

Bitt. Dear me! I don't know; perhaps that might be the colour of her native country.

Ann. Of her country? dear Mr. Bitterman, you can tell me then, where Mrs. Smith comes from?

Bitt. No, my charming girl; I have never had any letters about her from any of my numerous correspondents.

Ann. If pride is the sign of nobility, I'm sure she must be a princess, but my Lord himself is the only cause of it: he walks with her: she dines at

his table : he talks to her with the greatest familiarity ; even now at this present moment, they are at tea together.

Bitt. And what can I say to that ?

Ann. Ought not a lord to keep always a certain distance from his inferiors ? And where he nothing else in the world but a lord.

Bitt. Most certainly : most assuredly.

Ann. Just as if I were to be familiar with the peasants in the village ; tho' my father was first and favourite coachman to the honourable father of the Right Honourable Lord Stanton.

Bitt. God forbid any such familiarity.

Ann. And I can tell ye, Mr. Bitterman, I'll not remain in the house under such circumstances. Either I shall go or Mrs. Smith.

Enter MRS. BLANNEY.

Bran. Ay ! what is the matter with Mrs. Smith ? Did you not speak of her ?

Bitt. Yes, most honourable Sir ; something about ——

Bran. (To Ann.) Tell my sister I expect her with anxiety. [To Ann.]

Well, Mr. Bitterman, may I know the subject of your conversation ?

Bitt. Why, we were speaking here and there—this and that—something about nothing.

Bran. You rouse my curiosity—perhaps a secret ?

Bitt. A secret ! no, no—then I should have letters :—no, we conversed about jolly things.

Exit.

Bran. Then I can have no scruple in requesting to share your conversation.

Bitt. Your Lordship does me much honour. Well then :—we in the beginning made some very common observations. The honourable Miss —, Chambermaid of my Lady, thought every one has some faults : upon which I said—Yes ! Soon after I observed, that the best may err ; upon which the worthy Miss said—Yes.

Bran. If this be the introduction to the faults of Mrs. Smith, then I am very anxious to hear something more.

Bitt. Dear me !—Mrs. Smith, without doubt, is a good, homely, woman ; but yet she is no angel neither. As a faithful servant of his Lordship, it is my duty to whisper several things in his ear, which hurt the stock in hand, and the revenue of his Lordship.

Bran. I long to hear.

Bitt. His Lordship, for instance, will expect to have at least twenty dozen of the old curious wine, left him by his father : ah ! twenty dozen at least ; and he will find that scarcely ten bottles are left, and I am sure my family never tasted one drop of it.

Bran. Does Mrs. Smith like wine so much ?

Bitt. No, not she herself ; but whenever there was a sick peasant in the village, who would have been happy enough to have got a draught of gin, she would run to him herself with a bottle of this precious wine in her hand. I very often, according to my duty, reproached her for so doing, but she always answered, “ I’ll be responsible.”

Bran. So will I!— So will I!

Bliz. I protest to heaven, I am innocent, I assure you, Sir. I have had the care of the cellar these twenty years, but with my consent the poor never had one drop of wine, and though she's so extravagant on one side, she is a miser on the other. On my Lord's last birth-day, I invited all the gentlefolks of the neighbourhood, and I wanted to treat them with a bottle of that excellent wine; but she denied me even a single bottle, and I was under the necessity of treating my friends with Lisbon—only consider, Sir!

Bran. (*Smiling.*) Astonishing! but I have heard enough, Mr. Bliterman; pray let my sister know that I'm here.

Bliz. Certainly. I am your most obedient and most humble servant. But here is my Lady herself.

[*Enter Lady.*]

Bran. An insufferable babbler. But with a knowing it, he develops every moment new charms and virtues of Mrs. Smith.

Enter Lady SEXTON.

Lady. Truly people in love are a very prompt sort of beings; they are neither hungry nor thirsty. Scarcely have I taken a cup of tea, when my dear loving brother calls me from the table—Well, what are your orders now?

Bran. Can you tell me a question? Have you seen Mrs. Smith?

Lady. Yes.

Bran. Where?

[*Exit.*]

Lady S. I can do nothing.

Bran. Nothing! how—how?

Lady S. That is as much as to say, if my dear brother steers for no other port, he may always be in the high seas.

Bran. But why, why? is she married?

Lady S. I don't know.

Bran. Isn't she of a good family?

Lady S. I must not say that.

Bran. Does not she like me?

Lady S. Upon this question I must owe you the answer.

Bran. Oh, how much I admire sisterly love! How charming it is, that I did not trust all my secrets to you! How much am I indebted to Fate, which sent me a friend, who will make the love of a sister blush.

Lady S. A friend! you found a friend? how?

Bran. Oh yes, yes, a friend:—the strange Gentleman, who this morning saved your husband's life, is the friend of my early youth.

Lady S. What is his name?

Bran. I don't know.

Lady S. What is his character?

Bran. I must not say that.

Lady S. Will he come? tell me, pray!

Bran. Upon this question I must owe you the answer.

Lady S. This is insupportable.

Bran. Why, Sister, will you not hear your own composition encored?

Enter

Enter Lord SANTON and Mrs. SMITH.

Lord S. I cannot but admire your confidence in me, my Lady. How can you always leave me in the company of Mrs. Smith. She is so good a talker that I am afraid she will be your rival.

Lady S. A serious confession indeed.

Mrs. Sm. My Lord is in good humour!

Lord S. Well, Branley, when will the strange Gentleman come?

Bran. I expect him every moment, however we shall not gain a great deal by his company, because he intends to set off to-morrow for another part of England.

Lord S. That he sha'nt. Mrs. Smith and my Lady do you throw out your net of charms, and let us detain him here.

Lady S. What Mrs. Smith was unable to do in four months' acquaintance with him, I shall now be able to accomplish in a few moments.

Mrs. Sm. I have no acquaintance with him; I only once saw him very far off upon the hill; I only could see that his coat was of a dark colour.

Enter BURLINGAME.

Bur. The strange Gentleman! How to have the pleasure of waiting on his Lordship.

Lord S. He is welcome, welcome indeed!

Enter STRANGER from the back door, with a hat which remains upon; his arms crossed, and a sword in his hand.

Stranger. My Lord, good evening.

Lord S. Generous man! Let me welcome you to this house.

Mrs. S. (*Looking at the Stranger and with a loud cry of astonishment.*) Gracious Heaven! My Husband!

(*The Stranger at the same time seeing Mrs. SMITH, surprise overcomes him; cold and furiously he exclaims—Damnation! My wife! The Stranger runs out at the door where he entered.—Mrs. SMITH faints. Every one appears struck with surprise. SANTON and BRANLEY are busy in assisting Mrs. SMITH.—The curtain falls.*)

A C T V.

SCENE.—*As at the End of last Act.*

Enter My LORD and BITTERMAN from different sides.

Bitt. My Lord, the dishes are on the table.

Lord S. I hope something else is there besides the dishes.

Bitt. All kinds of excellent things, and in plenty—Crabs as large turtles; fishes like whales; turkies like oxen.

Lord S. Indeed, had you the greatest choice of things, I could not enjoy any without friends were round my table, to give a zest to my appetite. The more they eat, the more they taste my wine, the more I am pleased.

Bitt. In that case, my Lord, I humbly beg leave to recommend myself and my son Peter.—We can eat as much as any ten others.

Lord S. Where is my Lady? Where is Branley? Is Mrs. Smith quite well again? Indeed the whole family seems to be in an uproar.

Bitt. I am sure, had such an accident befallen your most obedient, most humble servant, Bitterman, who has had the great honour to be thus twenty years in your Lordship's service, they would have thrown a pail of cold water over me!

Lord S. I think they would.

Enter Mrs. Smith.

Lord S. Ah! here at last comes one, who will assist me in doing the honours of the table. But, dear Branley, what a dull countenance you have.

Bran. Excuse me, my Lord, I am neither hungry nor thirsty.

Lord S. Nothing can give me so much pain as to see such confusion in my house; but how does Mrs. Smith?

Bran. She seems much better.

Lord S. I am happy to hear it. Where is my Lady?

Bran. Still busy with Mrs. Smith.

Lord S. Come, Bitterman, you must even call your son, and keep me company with him at the table, for I find nobody else will.

Bitt. With all possible pleasure, my Lord.

[Exit Lord S. and Bitterman.]

Bran. (Alone a page.) Oh, deceiving hope— Ah, charms of finery, whither are ye fled?— I stretch my arm to embrace this fillet, and see it vanish like a dream. Poor Henry! The secret

is discovered—Mrs. Smith is the wife of my friend Sir Henry Montale! Well then, I will serve thee, but it shall not be in words; I cannot be happy myself, but perhaps it is in my power to unite two souls again that were separated by Fate's inconceivable malice.

Enter Lady SANTON and Mrs. SMITH.

Lady S. Let us go into the garden, my dear, the open air will do you good.

Mrs. Sm. I am very well, my Lady; I am sorry to give you so much trouble. Pray leave me to myself.

Bran. Not so, Madam, time is precious. Your husband intends to go from hence to-morrow. Let us think on some method to reconcile you to each other.

Mrs. Sm. How, are you acquainted?—

Bran. I know all. Sir Henry, your husband was the friend of my youth, and he is still my friend. We served together from Ensign to the rank of Major; and fought many battles with mutual ardour. It is now seven years since we have seen each other. To-day, Chance brought us together, when he poured his griefs into the ear of friendship.

Mrs. Sm. Oh, my Lady! let me hide my face in your bosom; I feel, indeed, what it is to look into the face of men with a heart oppressed with guilt.

Bran. If unfeigned repentance, three years of contrition, and a life spent without reproach, have

no claim to forgiveness, what can we expect of heaven! No, Madam, you have suffered enough; vice for one moment conquered virtue, which slumbered in your bosom. Virtue, awakened, and wanted but one effort to regain its former strength. I know my friend Sir Henry. He thinks with all the fortitude of a man; but he can feel as tenderly as a woman. I will hasten to him, and be your representative. *(Going.)*

Mrs. Sm. What will you do, Sir?—No! no! never! The honour of my husband is sacred to me. I love him truly; but I never can be his wife again, even were he so generous as to forgive me.

Bran. What you say cannot be the dictates of your heart.

Mrs. Sm. What would be my repentance; had I any other view than to appease my tormenting conscience!

Bran. But if your husband should——

Mrs. Sm. That he shall not—he must not. He must tear from his heart the dangerous weakness;—a weakness which would dishonour him.

Bran. Wonderful! You have then nothing to say to him?

Mrs. Sm. O, yes! two requests. Often when in the midst of sorrow I despaired of being ever happy again;—It appeared to me, that I should feel less grief if heaven would grant me one more interview with my husband, to confess to him myself the wrongs which I had done him; and to take an
eternal

eternal leave. This, Sir, is my first request;—my second, is—(*Weeping*,) to know something of my children!

Bran. If humanity and friendship have left a shadow of feeling within his breast, he will not hesitate one moment to fulfil them both.

[*Exit BRANLEY.*]

Lady S. Heaven assist you!

Mrs. Sm. And my prayers!

Lady S. Let us follow him, my friend, and take a walk amongst yon' venerable oaks, till he returns with hope and consolation.

Mrs. Sm. I will follow you, my Lady. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE—*The Cottage.*

Enter Major BRANLEY. Surely the ways of Providence seem unaccountable in the parting two such hearts. But they must be united again. The character I have taken upon myself is more difficult than I conceived it to be. What shall I answer, if he tells me the sufferings of his honour;—if he asks me whether I will make him the ridicule of the world. By heaven! an unchaste wife is the worst of wretches. To forgive her, who can commit such a crime in contradiction to her marriage vow—in violation of conscience; is it not partaking her shame. Yet Lady Montale is an exception; she is not wholly guilty; has suffered much, and her repentance is sincere.

Enter FRANCIS, with WILLIAM and FANNY.

Will. Ah, I am so tired!

Fanny. Shan't we be at home soon?

Fran. You *are* at home, my sweet children.—
Come this way.

Bran. Stay, stay, whose children are these?

Fran. They are my master's children.

Hill. Is this my father?

Fanny. I long to see my father!

Bran. It darts through my imagination like a ray of light!—A thought of exquisite beauty! One word, good man. I know you love your master. We have experienced wonderful things.

Fran. What may they be?

Bran. Your master has found his wife again.

Hill. My mother, ah! my mother?

Fran. Has he indeed?—I am glad of it.

Bran. Mrs. Smith.

Fran. What? No, it can't be possible!

Bran. Yes, she is his wife. But alas! there are circumstances which prevent their happiness. I entreat you, for your master's sake, to go with these sweet children, and conceal them in yonder summer-house. The unexpected sight of them may do more than years of eloquence.

Fran. But I don't know why.

Bran. Ask no questions, good man, before half an hour is past, you shall know all.

Fran. Well, well! I will do it. Since I have been with my master I have forgotten how to ask for reasons! Come, dear children, come!

[Exeunt]

Bran. Delightful! I promise myself much success

cesses from this innocent intrigue. Where the soft and tender looks of his wife cannot reach, perhaps the innocent smile of the children may soften the rugged way.

Enter STRANGER.

Bran. (Meeting him.) Ah, Henry ! I may wish you joy.

Stran. (Sullenly.) Joy ! of what ?

Bran. You have found your Sophia again.

Stran. Ah, Branley, shew the beggar the treasure he once possessed, and ask him, whether he is rich by looking at it ?

Bran. Why not ; provided he has it in his power to be rich again ?

Stran. I understand you : you are the Ambassador of Sophia : I understand you, but her endeavours are fruitless.

Bran. Yes, I am the Ambassador of your wife, but without the least authority to treat for peace between you. Tho' she still loves you, she does not even dare to entertain a wish to be forgiven.

Fran. Farce ! it is in this manner she thinks to deceive me. For these four months has Sophia lived near me : she knew that well.

Bran. No, indeed, she saw you to-day for the first time.

Stran. She may tell this to a fool. She well knew, that the way to my heart was not thro' the highroad of common repentance ; she, therefore, invented a cunning intriguing plan ; she played the benefactor every where, but so, that I might hear
of

of it: she knew well, that this would touch my heart. To-day, she says, she wishes not to be forgiven; she means to excite my generosity. No, no, it is too late.

Bran. I would not interrupt you while you spoke. But pardon me, Henry, I could not excuse such ill-founded surmises in any but yourself. Your wife solemnly declares, that she wishes not to try your generous heart; she wishes not to sacrifice your honour to her happiness.

Stran. Cease, cease, if you are a friend; I see you have conspired against me; conspired to touch my heart. Say, say, what is the purpose of your coming?

Bran. She wishes one interview.

Stran. She may come; oh, I am strong; my heart once was soft and tender, but now 'tis hard: she may come.

Bran. Thanks for this consent. [*Exit BRANLEY.*]

Stran. (*After a pause.*) Henry, thy last happy moment is approaching. Thou shalt see her once more. My wife, my fallen wife, whom still I love. Oh, could I but fly to meet her; could I but press her to this beating heart! Could I but give you, my dear children, a tender mother again. But stay! is this the language of an offended husband? Alas! I feel that the chimera honour is only in our heads, not in the heart. I will speak seriously to her; no reproach shall augment her pain.—But they come, now pride awaken; now honour protect me!

Enter

Enter Mrs. Smith, Lady S. and Branley behind.

Mrs. Sm. (Approaching slowly to Lady S. who offers to assist her.) Excuse me, my Lady, I once had strength enough to transgress a sacred vow ; and shall I not have courage to appear before his eyes. (*To the Stranger ;*) Sir Henry !

Stran. (Turning from her, but with a tender voice ;) What wilt thou of me, Sophia ?

Mrs. Sm. (Much agitated.) No, no! Oh, heaven; for this I was not prepared! This tone overpowers me; this kindness; this familiarity—No! Oh generous man, choose a rougher, harder tone for the ear of the offender.

Stran. Well, Madam!

Mrs. Sm. Ah, wou'd you but ease my heart with reproaches.

Stran. Reproaches? No, my only reproaches are written on these pale cheeks: these hollow eyes. These reproaches I cannot hide, but my words shall spare your sorrow.

Mrs. Sm. Were I the most hard-hearted criminal, this generous silence wou'd be the keenest punishment for those black trespasses, which once your wife was capable of.

Stran. No confession, Madam. I know all, and will hear of no humiliation. But you expect that we must part for ever.

Mrs. Sm. I know it; and I did not come here to be forgiven. All that I request is, to hear from your own lips, that you will not curse the remembrance of your former wife.

Stran

Stran. No, Sophia ! I will never, never curse your memory. Your love once sweetened my days—those days of heavenly joy : no, no, I will never curse your memory.

Mrs. Sm. (*Much moved.*) With the sincere conviction that I was unworthy of your name, I have assumed another these three years. But that is not enough. This paper is necessary to enable you to spend happier days in the arms of a worthier wife.

Stran. (*Takes the paper and tears it.*) Be it destroyed for ever ! No, Sophia, you alone reigned in this heart, you alone shall, tho' far distant, reign for ever in it. Never, never, shall another indemnify Henry for the loss he has sustained.

Mrs. Sm. Is there ought more to be said ?

Stran. Stay one moment ! we have lived very near to each other for these three months past. I have heard much good of you, and that your heart feels tenderly for the sufferings of mankind. This I admire ; and you shall never want the means to nourish and to gratify these humane principles. This letter will enable you to draw on my Banker to whatever amount you please.

Mrs. Sm. No, never ! the labour of my hands shall maintain me ; a morsel of bread wet with the tear of unfeigned repentance, will give me more comfort than the possession of the whole fortune of a man, whom I have so grossly offended.

Stran. Take it ; take it, Madam !

Mrs. Sm. Let me appeal to your own generous heart, not to force me to a humiliation so great.

Stran. Oh! what a wife did that villain rob me of! (*Aside.*) Madam, I honour your sentiment, and abandon my wish—with one condition, however: that should you ever be in want, I shall be the first and only friend of whom you ask assistance.

Mrs. Sm. (*Weeping.*) I promise it.

Stran. And now at least I may request you to take back your own property; your jewels. (*Gives her a casket.*)

Mrs. Sm. (*Opening it.*) Alas! how my heart tutters at the sweet remembrance of the evening, when you gave me these jewels!—These you gave me on the evening of the day of our union. Gay and happy I repeated the oath of everlasting faith—which now is broken. This pin you gave me five years ago, on my birth-day.—What a day of joy was that! This bracelet I received when my William was born.—No, no! I cannot keep these jewels, except it is your wish to punish me with the sight of them. Take them back! Take them back! (*He takes the casket back in great agitation:—She retains the bracelet.*)

Mrs. Sm. Only this bracelet I will keep, for the memory of my William.

Stran. Now, Madam!—let us part—

Mrs. Sm. Only one moment longer.—Answer me only one anxious question—the question of the heart of a mother.—Are my children living?

Stran. They live.—

Mrs. Sm. Are they well?

Stran. They are. —

Mrs. Sm. Thanks to heaven! My charming William!

William! My Fanny!—Is she your favourite still?
—(*I pause.*) Generous man! Only once more let
me see my children before you part, that I may
kiss in them the picture of their father. (*I pause.*)
Ah! if you knew the sorrows of my heart, during
the three last long and painful years! How I trem-
bled when I saw children of the same age! Only
once more permit me to see those on whom my
heart fondly reposed!

Stran. (*In great agitation, breathing short.*) Wil-
lingly, Sophia. This evening—I expect them
every moment.—They were educated in a neigh-
bouring village. I have sent my servant for them.
He might have been back now. They shall be
sent to you.—They may stay the whole night.—
To-morrow I will take them with me.

(*During the preceding dialogue Major Branley,
who, with Lady Santon, stood behind—goes
into the hut, and returns with Lord Santon and
the two children; Francis follows. Lady
Santon takes William, and Branley takes
Fanny, Lady Santon standing behind Mrs.
Smith, and Branley behind the Stranger.*)

Mrs. Sm. (*Approaching to the Stranger.*) Once
more let me press this hand to my bosom: in a
better world we shall meet again.

Stran. There reigns no prejudice—farewell?

(*As they turn from each other, both deeply affected,
the Stranger meets Fanny, and Mrs. Smith
meets William—Both utter an exclamation of
joy, and fall into their children's embraces.*)

Will. My Mother !

Fanny. My Father !

Mrs. Sm. My William ! Almighty Powers ! this joy is too great.

(A long pause—After which the Stranger and Mrs. Smith look tenderly at each other—he flies into her arms.)

Stran. Sophia ! O ! Sophia, accept my forgiveness of thee. Thou art my wife again, and all—all is forgotten !

Mrs. Sm. Oh !

(The children hang upon their parents, and call—my father ! my mother ! Lady Santon weeps, and every countenance sympathises. The curtain drops suddenly.)

THE END.

Aug

Return this material to the library,
from which it was borrowed.

IN 01 2000

FEB 07 00

1/31/06

100

100

Gaylord
PAMPHLET BINDER

3 1158 01020 3

AA 000 079 569

